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FARM LABOR AND THE LABOR SUPPLY SITUATION

IN

CONNECTICUT, 1941

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for
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(Statement prepared by Samuel Liss, assisted by I. Salkind, Farm Security Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture)

A. FARM LABOR BACKGROUND

Farm Labor Force Required and Seasonality of Major Types of Farming

The major types of commercial farming in Connecticut in which both regular and extra seasonal farm workers are employed are tobacco (shade and sun-grown), dairy, vegetable, potato, fruit and berry and poultry. In contrast to other types of farming, which are generally scattered over the state, tobacco growing is concentrated in a comparatively small geographic area of Connecticut. Its acreage lies predominantly in Hartford County, particularly in those townships bordering the Connecticut River. Potato acreage is less concentrated than tobacco, but a substantial portion of it is found, together with sun-grown tobacco, on the northeast bank of the River in Hartford County. Parts of New Haven and New London Counties are devoted largely to truck vegetable and berry farming and parts of Litchfield County mostly to dairying.

Tobacco plantations are by far the largest employers of both regular and seasonal labor in point of total numbers as well as in terms of average farm-unit hiring. The seasonal labor peak in shade tobacco is particularly high, such employment amounting to about five times the number of regular workers hired during the year. In sun-grown tobacco, the seasonal-regular labor ratio is about three to one. Dairy farms rank second to tobacco in terms of total volume of workers employed, but rank much lower on the basis of average employment per farm-unit. Similarly, the seasonal labor increase on dairy farms as a whole is substantial largely because of the many units in the industry, but it is very small on a per farm-unit basis. Vegetable and fruit and berry farms rank third and fourth, respectively, in terms of total volume employment of hired labor. Fruit farms, however, employ more per farm unit than vegetable farms. Seasonal labor employment on each of these types of farms is comparatively high - 4.5 and four times the regular labor requirements, respectively. Potato farms employ considerably less year-round workers than poultry raising enterprises, but the seasonal labor peak on the former is much higher than on the latter. The following table shows the estimated total and average per farm-unit employment of regular and seasonal farm laborers by types of commercial farming in Connecticut in 1940:1/

1/ These estimates were arrived at by members of the Extension Service at the University of Connecticut.

Type of Farming	No. of Farms	Regular Help	Seasonal Help	Employment per farm unit-regular	Employment per farm unit-seasonal
Shade Tobacco	52	1600	8400	30.8	105.4
Havana Seed & Broad Leaf (Sun-grown tobacco)	1150	2760	6700	2.5	5.8
Potatoes	150	300	1250	2.0	8.3
Fruit	500	750	3500	1.5	7.0
Vegetables	1000	1000	4000	1.0	4.0
Poultry	1500	1100	500	0.8	0.3
Dairy	5900	6300	8000	1.1	1.4

The shade-grown tobacco harvesting season commences around July 10, and is completed about September 1. Sun-grown tobacco is cut betwe the middle of August and September 10, with peak operations falling betwoon August 15 and 25. This year about 6,500 acres have been planted to shade tobacco and about 13,500 acres to the sun-grown variety. The extra seasonal labor requirements for shade-grown tobacco is estimated to be slightly less than 1.5 men to the acre, and for sun-grown, one-half man per acre. This is equivalent to a working force of 8400 in shade tobacco and about 6700 in sun-grown tobacco, or a total seasonal employment in both field harvesting operations and in preliminary-processing work conducted in tobacco barn of slightly over 15,000 workers. Seasonal harvest hands employed in other types of farming have been estimated to number about 1200 in potatoes, 3500 in fruit orchards and berry fields, 4000 in vegetables, 500 in poultry, and about 8000 in dairy farming. This brings the total gross or cumulative employment to about 32,000 man-jobs, or the number which have to be filled for varying periods of employment throughout the agricultural season in the state.

Partial or complete sequence in the maturity of the Connecticut crops however, permits seasonal employment of part of the labor force in more than one crop or job so that at no time would the maximum 32,000

individual workers be required. This assumes a fair degree of labor mobility. If we further assume, for example, that from one-third to one-half of the gross or cumulative employment is performed by seasonal farm laborers working in two crops or two farm jobs, it would seem that the maximum number of laborers needed for seasonal work in Connecticut agriculture would range roughly from 24,000 to 27,000. A more careful analysis of seasonal employment of farm laborers particularly as it is reflected in the harvesting operations of each individual crop or farm activity within certain well-defined periods of time during the agricultural season would probably reduce these figures appreciably.

The possibilities which exist for seasonal laborers to capture more than one job during the agricultural season in Connecticut can be roughly illustrated by a recital of the agricultural seasonality in the state. Laborers employed in shade tobacco, for example are ostensibly free to move over to work in the sun-grown tobacco harvest toward the end of August and continue until about September 10, or to obtain jobs on dairy farms involving silo filling between September 1 and September 15. The apple harvesting period, September 15 to October 10, lends itself also to the employment of workers previously engaged in tobacco work. The harvesting of peaches, August 20 to September 10, and of tomatoes and sweet corn, July 20 to September 20, overlap largely with the tobacco harvest period. But farmers who raise potatoes, which are harvested in October and in early November, are in a position to tap seasonal workers employed in earlier crops. Strawberry farmers who harvest in June find little competition for the local labor supply from other crops, but dairy farms which employ extra seasonal labor between June 20 and August 1, mostly for haying operations, are faced with such competition from the shade tobacco growers. Beans are harvested from the end of June to late September or into October, while most of the other vegetables have a long season starting May 1 and terminating early in September.

Tobacco Farming

1) Characteristics of tobacco production.

Tobacco farming in Connecticut is of two types: a) shade-grown and b) sun-grown. Practically all of the tobacco raised in Connecticut (and in the Connecticut River Valley extending into Massachusetts), both the shade and outdoor grown varieties, is used as wrappers for cigars. A relatively small volume is used as binders and fillers. 1/

1/ A cigar consists of three parts, the filler, the binder which is used to keep the filler in the form of a cigar, and the wrapper which is the finishing or outside leaf.

The sole market for Connecticut tobacco, in any event, lies in the cigar field. The shade-grown tobacco differs in its physical production aspects from the Havana Seed or Broad Leaf in that its growth is protected from the sun's rays by huge "tents". These "tents" are made of rough but sturdy cheesecloth stretched over wires which are attached to poles about 10 feet high. This process of partially diverting the sun rays keeps the temperature even and increases the humidity. The control thus effected produces a leaf the texture of which is considerably finer than that of sun-grown tobacco. The process also has the effect of producing a more consumer-appealing color as well as decreasing the weight of the leaf without impairing its textile strength.

The shade tobacco growing and marketing industry in Connecticut is "big business" measured in terms of large size of plant and output, high total and per unit investment and employment of large numbers of field and shed workers. The product is produced by a comparatively small number of large companies or corporations whose production costs and value of the crop are characteristically high. The relatively few "dirt farmers" who are engaged in the production of this type of tobacco are usually financed by these merchant-growers or companies for whom it is grown under contract and under their supervision. In 1940, for example, there were only 47 growers of shade tobacco in Connecticut. They produced almost five million pounds of this crop on approximately 6,000 acres, or, on the average, over 100,000 pounds per grower on an average plantation of about 125 acres. When it is realized that the gross cost of producing one acre of this product is almost $1,000, even the average grower, it will be noted, is compelled to make an appreciably large outlay. The characteristically large-scale nature of this type of farming is further indicated by the fact that the total farm value of Connecticut shade tobacco last year (1940) was $3,382,000 or an average gross return of $81,532 per grower. Moreover, a distribution of the 47 shade tobacco growers by size of plant and production indicates a high degree of concentration of land holdings and of output even among this comparatively small number of producers. In 1940, ten growers, or about 20 per cent of the total, accounted for 65 per cent of the acreage, and of the output and 66 per cent of the total value of the crop; only three growers, with tobacco plantations of over 500 acres, it will be noted, controlled over 40 per cent of the acreage, and of the output and received over 40% of the farm value of the crop. The following table shows the distribution of acreage, production and farm value of the crop by size of growers:

SHADE-GROWN TOBACCO PRODUCTION IN CONNECTICUT BY SIZE OF FARMS in 1940 1/

Size (acres)	Growers		Acreage		Production		Farm Value of Crop	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	Number	Percent	Thous. of Dollars	Percent
1 - 49.9	19	40.4	580	10.0	493,000	10.0	385	10.0
50 - 149.9	18	38.3	1389	24.0	1,180,650	24.0	921	24.1
150 - 499.9	7	14.9	1421	24.7	1,207,850	24.9	942	24.6
500 - 1,000 & over	3	6.4	2389	41.3	2,030,650	41.1	1,584	41.3
TOTAL	47	100.0	5779	100.0	4,912,150	100.0	3,832	100.0

1/ Distribution of shade-grown tobacco acreage and number of growers was obtained from the Connecticut Agricultural Conservation Program. Production figures were derived by applying the 1940 yield of 850 pounds per acre; this yield figure was taken from the November 12, 1940 Crop Report on Tobacco, Agricultural Marketing Service.

"Farm value of crop obtained from the Agricultural Marketing Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture."

With the exception of a few large sun-grown tobacco producers, the farm units devoted to this variety of the product are much smaller than those on which shade tobacco is raised. Outdoor tobacco is raised by dirt farmers with small capital. The gross cost of producing an acre of this product is about $200. To the majority of these growers, the tobacco raised on a few acres represents their only money crop. In 1940, for example, the average outdoor tobacco farmer had less than nine acres devoted to this crop, compared with 125 acres of the average shade tobacco growers.

The underlying reason for this structural set-up is obvious: although there is about twice the acreage in outdoor tobacco than in shade-grown tobacco in Connecticut, the number of those growing the former variety is many times larger the number of those growing the latter variety. Thus, in 1940, there were harvested 10,385 acres of outdoor tobacco which yielded slightly over 16 million pounds of leaf with a farm value of $3,362,000. On the other hand, there were but 5,779 acres of shade tobacco harvested that year which yielded slightly less than five million pounds of leaf with an estimated farm value of $ 3,832,000 . The outdoor tobacco was grown by about 1200 farmers; the shade, by 47 growers represented, in the main, by 17 large grower-marketing concerns. In 1929, the permanent investment in land and equipment of outdoor tobacco farmers approached $55 million, while that of the shade growers, about $20 million.

Most of the shade leaf is packed by the growers and sold to jobbers or cigar manufacturers. The operation of the Consolidated Cigar Corporation displays perhaps the highest degree of vertical intergration. This company not only grows, processes and markets its product, but actually manufactures the finished product - the cigar. In 1940 as in 1939, the American Sumatra Tobacco Corporation was the largest single grower of shade tobacco and the Consolidated Cigar Corporation was the second largest. Other large producers of this variety of tobacco are: Cullman Brothers, Inc.; Windsor Shade Tobacco Company; Kahn Brothers Tobacco Company; Meyer and Mendelsohn, Inc.; Otel Tobacco Corporation; A. N. Shepard and Son; Silberman-Kahn Corporation; Howard Whitaker; Rapaport and Son; Victor C. Fassler; Wetstone-Kamins Tobacco Co.; and Hathaway-Steane Corporation.

In the outdoor field, on the other hand, the small grower usually sells his bundles of tobacco to the representative of some packing house which sizes, sorts and sweats the product before disposing of it to the cigar manufacturer. The following table shows the distribution of acreage, production and farm value of outdoor tobacco by size of farm. Also attached is a listing of the 1940 acreages grown.

SUN-GROWN TOBACCO PRODUCTION IN CONNECTICUT BY SIZE OF FARMS IN 1940 1/

Size (Acres	Growers		Acreage		Production		Farm Value of Crop	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	Number	Percent	Thous. of Dollars	Percent
.1 - 5	516	42.8	1,589.9	15.4	2,457,191	15.4	516	15.4
5.1 - 10	448	37.2	3,318.6	31.9	5,130,890	32.1	1,078	32.0
10.1 - 25	192	15.9	3,040.3	29.2	4,682,523	29.1	983	29.2
25.1 - 50	37	03.1	1,271.3	12.2	1,954,429	12.2	410	12.2
Over 50	12	01.0	1,164.7	11.3	1,784,023	11.2	375	11.2
TOTAL	1,205	100.0	10,3 84.8	100.0	16,005,056	100.0	3,362	100.0

1/ Data obtained from the Agricultural Conservation Program, University of Connecticut, June 4, 1941.
"Farm value of crop obtained from the Agricultural Marketing Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture."

THE CONNECTICUT VALLEY SHADE GROWERS ASSOCIATION, INCORPORATED
CONNECTICUT VALLEY SHADE-GROWN TYPE 61A ACREAGE GROWN IN 1940
AMERICAN SUMATRA TOBACCO CORPORATION

American Sumatra Tobacco Corp.		1120-97
CULLMAN BROTHERS, INC.		
	area sq. rods	
Cullman Bros., Inc.	319-74	
Paul Sullivan	20- 0	
Arthur Hayes	25- 0	364-74
THE WINDSOR SHADE TOBACCO COMPANY, INC.		
F. M. Arnold & Sons	57-76	
V. C. Brewer & Son	53-46	
A. A. Clark	116-158	
R. B. Clark	70-118	
Howard Thrall	91-45	
Oliver Thrall	94- 8	
C. F. Woodford & Son	31-115	515-86
THE GERSHEL-KAFFENBURGH TOBACCO COMPANY		
The Gershel-Kaffenburgh Tobacco Co.		305- 6
GRIFFIN-FULLER TOBACCO COMPANY		
Griffin-Fuller Tobacco Co.	103-104	
Charles F. Griffin	40- 0	
Estate Fred M. Colton	50-23	
Estate A. T. Pattison	71-146	
Howard McCormick	20-99	286-52
L. B. HAAS & COMPANY, INC.		
L. B. Haas & Company, Inc.	185-143	
Huntington Bros.	168-96	
Benjamin Kanter	45-123	
Hubbell F. Brown	17-111	417-153
THE HARTMAN TOBACCO COMPANY		
The Hartman Tobacco Co.	473-88	
I. H. Woodworth	65-120	539-48
KOHN BROTHERS TOBACCO COMPANY, INC.		
Kohn Bros. Tobacco Co., Inc.	189-54	
J. F. Ransom	72-128	
Estate Harry C. Griswold	23-62	
Fred Morgan	0- 0	
William E. Hastings	78-119	
Estate A. H. Brown	24-45	
Estate A. H. Grant	58-40	
Samuel Friend	27-78	

KOHN BROTHERS TOBACCO COMPANY, INC. (continued)

	Acres sq. rods	
M. Silverherz & Son	32-19	506-65

MEYER & MENDELSOHN, INC.

Meyer & Mendelsohn, Inc.	34-78	
Tudor F. Holcomb	55-142	
Walter Wolf	34-33	
James L. Day	40-63	164-156

THE OTEE TOBACCO CORPORATION

Otee Tobacco Corp.		99-100

A. N. SHEPARD & SON

A. N. Shepard & Son	31-108	
Friend & Co., Inc.	169-141	201-89

CONSOLIDATED CIGAR CORPORATION

Consolidated Cigar Corporation		
Silberman & Kahn		949-56
Mrs. A. Dubon		

LESLIE W. SWIFT, INC.

Leslie W. Swift, Inc.		164-44

HOWARD WHITAKER

Howard Whitaker	28-156	
C. K. & H. T. Hale, Inc.	89-50	118-46

B. RAPAPORT & SON, INC.

Estate of Morris Rosenberg		90-86

S. A. FASSLER & COMPANY

S. A. Fassler & Company		44-27

THE WETSTONE TOBACCO CORPORATION

The Wetstone Tobacco Corp.		100-10

TOTAL TYPE 61A GROWN IN 1940..... 5988-75

2-Trends in Tobacco Production.

Tobacco acreage in Connecticut underwent slow but steady increase during the decade 1910 to 1920; it declined somewhat slower during the succeeding decade. Acreage in shade tobacco, however, reached its peak in 1921 and that in outdoor tobacco, in 1925. Since 1925 acreages in both of these crops declined rather sharply. By 1930, the total tobacco acreage in the state was about 40 per cent greater than in 1910 but almost 30 per cent less than in 1919, the all-time peak. Between 1930 and 1933, the decrease in acreage was extremely rapid. In 1934, the trend was again reversed largely because of the salutary effect on prices resulting from the A.A.A. program, and in 1940 the acreage in tobacco was 25 per cent higher compared with 1935.

From a wider agricultural point of view, greater significense is attached to the fluctuation in plant-capacity and output of sun-grown than of shade grown tobacco. The contraction of sun-grown tobacco in the state from 18,000 acres in 1928 to less than 7,000 acres in 1934 was accompanied by experimentation with other lines of production. In the first place, tobacco planting disappeared from the Housatonic Valley and tobacco culture withdrew to the heart of the Connecticut River Valley. Second, in the Valley itself, there was a shifting to potatoes, particularly on the northeast bank of the Connecticut River. Infiltration of vegetable farming nearer the markets and of poultry, dairy and part-time farming also occurred throughout the tobacco area. The non-tobacco enterprises which showed the most marked increase, however, were potatoe and vegetable farms, although the growth in dairying was also substantial. Chart I shows graphically the trend of production of both outdoor and shade-grown tobacco in Connecticut since 1910.

3-Labor Operations in Tobacco Farming.

The major operations in tobacco farming are the preparation of the seed bed and the planting of the seed in glass-covered frames, the preparation of the soil involving plowing, harrowing and steaming it, planting, cultivating, harvesting and the sorting, sewing, stringing and hoisting of the leaves to dry or cure in field tobacco barns. In the case of tobacco grown under shade, the sewing of the cheese cloth and draping it over the wires attached to poles is an important labor-consuming operation. Of these operations, harvesting and shed work require the largest amount of manual labor.

Pre-harvesting work is done usually by year-round workers, those employed from early Spring to late Fall, while harvesting and leaf-

drying or curing operations require extra seasonal workers for comparatively short periods of time, July through September. In shade tobacco, the sequence of operations are approximately as follows: April 1 to May 1 - preparing seed beds and soil; May 1 to June 1 - sewing cloth, plowing, harrowing and planting; June 1 to July 10 - planting and hoeing; July 10 to September 1 - harvesting and curing. The cutting of outdoor tobacco begins about one month after the commencement of shade tobacco picking, continues simultaneously with the shade tobacco harvest for about two weeks during the last half of August and ends about ten days to two weeks after the completion of shade tobacco picking.

The harvesting, sorting, sewing and stringing of shade tobacco leaves are accomplished mostly by youth labor - boys and girls between 14 and 18 years of age. They represent roughly 40 to 50 per cent of the labor supply. Between 15 and 20 per cent are adult women and the balance, 35 to 40 per cent are older boys and adult men. Young boys, because of their small stature are definitely preferred in picking the leaves grown under "tents". The work is done frequently in a crawling or stooping posture and, as is the case in all light "stoop crops", lends itself to child labor. Three and sometimes four pickings are required. Girls and women are employed in sewing cloth for "tents" prior to planting, and in sorting, sewing and stringing or stretching the leaves on laths as the crop is brought in from the field. The latter work is conducted in tobacco barns located in the fields. About two pickers to one sorter and sewer are required for the first picking and slightly less for the subsequent pickings. Some men are employed also in tobacco barns for the heavier work involved in hoisting laths of tobacco leaves for drying and curing. Older boys and men are used mostly for carting tobacco to the barns and for other heavy field work. Thus, for example, the picked leaves are placed in baskets by young pickers and the older boys drag the backets to the trucks which carry them to the tobacco barns.

The functional labor organization in outdoor tobacco farming differs significantly from shade tobacco work only in the harvesting operation. The proportion of older boys and men employed in cutting tobacco is appreciably larger than that engaged in picking the shade product. Outdoor tobacco is cut at the stalk with hatchets and involves, therefore, not only more laborious work but a more dangerous occupation. Shade tobacco is not harvested in this manner, being "primed" or carefully plucked from the stalk leaf by leaf. The outdoor variety, moreover, is then usually stripped from the stalks and "rigged" in the fields before carted or trucked to the barns to be sorted, sewed and strung on laths in the same way as are shade tobacco leaves.

4-Source of Labor

The principal source of farm labor, both regular and seasonal, for the tobacco fields of Connecticut lies within the state and usually is sufficiently near to the plantation for the workers to be transported daily by the growers free of charge to and from work during the period of employment. The large majority of the seasonal farm workers reside in the relatively near-by cities or towns of Hartford, East and West Hartford, Mansfield, Thompsonville, Manchester, New Britain, Wilson, Poquonock, etc., but Westfield and Springfield, in Massachusetts also contribute to this supply. Farm labor families living in adjacent rural regions are also drawn upon both for the seasonal pre-harvest and harvest operations. Most of this local labor consists of Negroes and persons of more immediate foreign extraction, mostly Polish and their native-born children.

Out-of-state migrant farm laborers represent a small proportion of the total labor force employed in Connecticut agriculture, and practically all of it is found on the shade tobacco plantations. The preponderant majority of these migrants are Negroes, usually from the southern states of North and South Carolina and from Georgia. In past years, most of the southern Negro labor recruited by the shade tobacco growers constituted preparatory school and college students of Negro educational institutions, but more recently the tendency has been to hire more and more experienced adult labor from the tobacco-growing regions of the South. In 1940, the Connecticut Labor Department reported that there were berween 250 ans 300 adult Negro males from various states of the South employed on tobacco plantations in the Connecticut River Valley. Since its investigation did not cover all the tobacco farms of the state, it is reasonable to assume that the actual figure was larger. Even if it is estimated that about 500 out-of-State migrants find their way to Connecticut each year, they would still represent a small proportion of the total farm labor force engaged in harvesting the crop. The significance of their influx, however, in terms of transportation, housing health, sanitation and other community problems which their presence generates outweighs their comparatively slim numbers.

In addition to out-of-state migrants, there are also seasonal workers in tobacco whose residence is Connecticut but too distant from the farms which employ them. Since such workers must all be provided with temporary housing at their place of work, they may be considered, from the housing point of view, as intra-state migrants. Most of the regular or semi-regular help is also housed on the farm or plantation and this, of course, reduces the available supply of housing already only too meager.

The recruiting of student and adult labor from southern educational institutions and from other out-of-state sources for the tobacco fields of Connecticut dates back to the spring of 1916. At that time, shortages of local labor for harvesting operations led the Shade Tobacco Growers Association to hire a special agent to canvas outside sources of farm laborers. The undertaking was directed by a man named John Luddy, and the organization which he set up was well financed. It is estimated that about $25,000 was expended for the work which was generally considered a success. The recruiting operations were conducted from the City of Hartford, but agents were stationed in New York, Boston, and in a number of cities in the South. Preliminary contacts and public relations work including, in the case of the educational institutions in the South, the presentation of the case before student and faculty bodies, preceded the mechanical operations carried through by the local recruiting agents.

About 2,000 workers, practically all unattached male Negroes, were ultimately imported for work in the tobacco harvest. It is estimated that about one-third came from Negro preparatory schools and colleges of the South, a smaller proportion from Boston and the majority, from New York City. Transportation costs were advanced by the Association, but later deducted from wages in sufficient amounts not only to repay the advance but also to insure their ability to return to their place of origin after the completion of the harvest.

It is alleged that recruiting was custom-made and on order, and no indiscriminate or blind recruiting characterized the operations. Nor was a surplus of migrant workers brought in. All transportation arrangements including the designation of the time and place of departure, the fixing of the hour and point of arrival, accommodations en route, reception on arrival, and subsequent placement on designated farms were planned in advance. Hired agents usually accompanied the workers on the train or bus to insure their arrival. Student-laborers from the South were generally escorted by a member of the faculty of the school from which they came or by an older student who acted in the capacity of an adviser. Although a number of workers deserted en route or after arrival, the operations were deemed generally successful.

It is the consensus of the agricultural interests of the state that the influx of this migrant labor in the spring of 1916 relieve the labor shortage not only for the shade tobacco growers for whom the plan was designed, but also for the outdoor tobacco growers whose harvesting season partly dovetails with that of the shade growers, and who therefore had access to it after its release at the culmination of the shade tobacco season. Indirect beneficiaries of this

movement, it is said, were other types of farming enterprises requiring extra seasonal farm laborers who became more accessible in local sources largely because of the additional supply of migrant workers. This, of course, is not a disinterested view, and leaves the impression that the whole affair was universally satisfactory. It is not unfair to suggest that there is a possibility, although no proof, that the local population usually engaged in farm work during the summer may have been adversely affected in terms of wages and employment opportunities by the influx of the migrants.

The migratory farm-labor movement into Connecticut during the last war produced at least three known questionable or undesirable results: (a) it established a precedent for this influx; (b) it caused an acute housing shortage on the tobacco plantations; and (c) it left an unemployed and partly destitute segment of these migrants as a relief burden on the city of Hartford where many of them settled permanently instead of returning home after the agricultural season. In fact, a substantional portion of the present Negro population in this city is composed of those migrants who did not return home in 1916 and who later brought their families to join them.

Today, tobacco growers who employ migrants recruit them on an individual basis rather than through a centrally organized effort as was the case in 1916. This is done usually by writing to a Negro educational institution in the South or to one or more former worker to bring a crew with him at a specified time. Students from Morehouse University in Atlanta, Georgie and high school boys and teacher from Goldsboro, North Carolina are known to come to Connecticut annually for the tobacco harvest. Others arrive from Greenville, South Carolina and Raleigh, North Caroline and from several other points in these two states and Georgia. Some are known to come from as far south as Texas and as far west as Detroit. A small number of migrants arrive in Connecticut as early as April and May but the majority come in June and early July and remain usually through September.

Whatever mode of transportation the migrants use, the cost of it is borne by them both ways. Growers are not known to send their trucks for these workers. Transportation costs, however, are frequently advanced by them and later deducted from wages in sufficient amounts to include the return as well as the coming journey. Other deductions from wages may be made for food supplied by the grower, the cost of services for a cook and sometimes for services rendered by a person in charge of keeping the living quarters clean.

A number of growers pay wage bonuses to migrant workers who remain until the end of the season. One planter has been known to pay such

a bonus of $10 to each worker. Others, hold back part of the wages in order to insure that workers remain until the completion of the harvest. Most of the migrants return to their place of origin at the end of the season. The comparatively few who remain usually seek employment in the larger towns or cities. In 1939, it was reported that 18 Negro migrants found jobs with a sand and gravel company in Hartford after tobacco work was completed.

5- Working and Living Conditions of Field and Shed Workers on Shade Tobacco Plantations.

One of the reports of the Connecticut Department of Labor and Factory Inspection described labor conditions on shade-tobacco plantations ten years ago as follows:

> In 1931 widespread complaints concerning conditions on tobacco plantations led to a thorough investigation of these plantations by the Health and Labor Departments. The conditions which were revealed regarding child labor, health and morality shocked public opinion. Ten year old boys were found working 55 and 60 hours per week at arduous and exhausting tasks. On the plantations, the boarding houses provided for resident workers, were found to be crowded and unsanitary. The kitchens were dirty and the handling, cooking and serving of food was carried on without any attempt at cleanliness. Men and women were boarded without any particular attention to proper segregation or supervision. 1/

Appropriate remedial action was impeded by the fact that farm work, including the large scale industrialized farming practiced on these plantations, was outside the jurisdiction of the labor laws. If improvements were to be initiated, it was necessary either to obtain voluntary agreements on labor standards from the growers or recommend legislation granting regulatory powers to a State administrative agency. Since the latter method presented difficulties and delays, an effort was made to obtain the voluntary cooperation of the growers in a broad constructive program for the elimination of these abuses. Beginning in 1932, and renewed annually since then, agreements were entered into by the Connecticut Department of Labor with about 90

1/ Report of the State of Connecticut, Department of Labor and Factory Inspection, 1936-38, Hartford, 1939.

per cent of the growers covering employment standards, among which was the provision not to employ children under 14 years of age. The latest agreement drafted in May 1940 at a conference of Connecticut tobacco growers and the State Department of Labor contained the following employment standards:

1. Child labor.

   a) Not to employ children under 14 years of age.
   b) Age certificates for all children of doubtful age. (Through the state board of education, announcement will be made in the schools to the effect that certification of age may be secured by all children between the ages of 14 and 16 years desiring employment on the tobacco fields this summer.)

2. Housing.

   a) Agreement on certain basic standards for all company and private boarding houses.
      1). No over crowding - adequate privacy.
      2). Cleanliness.
      3). All windows screened; outside ventilation for every sleeping room.
      4). Reasonably adequate beds and bedding.
      5). Two exits should be provided for persons sleeping above the second floor.
      6). Male and female boarders not to live in same building.
      7). Where employees provide own meals, refrigeration should be provided for their supplies.
   b). In company boarding houses one hearty, cooked meal per day with fresh milk should be made available
   c). Registration by a central agent on each plantation, of the name of each employee who boards in the vicinity and of the name and address of his or her boarding house; the registrations to be open to some central authority who will inspect boarding places.

3 Field.

   a). Water - should be readily available to both shed and field workers, in covered containers with sanitary bublers or paper cups.
   b). Safety kit - should be kept in every shed where work is going on.
   c). Privies - separate for men and women, marked, provided with locks and toilet paper, kept clean, not too far from work places.

4. Transportation. The excellent regulations r egarding transportation should be followed more generally.

5. Administration. On each plantation one man should be designated by the company to see that all labor regulations are carried out, and should be fully advised of any labor regulations adopted by the growers.

In August of that year (1940) representatives of the Department of Labor and a r-epresentative of the Consumer's League of Massachusetts visited 27 plantations, representing 16 growers to observe to what extent working and living conditions were improved in accordance with the agreement reached in the spring of the year. The following is a summary of their findings: 1/

1. Child labor.
   Thirteen children 13 years of age and two 12 years were working on plantations visited. On every field but one there were children of doubtful age who had not been asked for certificates. It was evident that the general practice was to request proff of age when children only appeared to be under 14 years of age.

2. Wages.
   Women generally received $1.00 for sewing three bundles of leaves. (There are usually 20 to 22 pairs of leaves to a lath and 50 laths constitute a bundle). The average experienced worker sewed 7 and 8 bundles a day, earning a daily wage of between $2.30 and $2.65. Leaf girls were paid by the day, their wages ranging from $1.75 to $2.25 a day. Older boys, employed mostly at hauling, received from $2.00 to $2.75 a day. Hourly wages in general averaged about 20¢ an hour. Wages, in some cases, were paid once every two weeks.

3. Hours.
   Usual working hours were 9 or 9½ hours a day and 54 to 57 hours a week. All fields were operating on a full six-day week.

1/ Working and Living Conditions on Connecticut Shade Tobacco Plantations, Summer, 1940, Connecticut Department of Labor and Factory Inspection.

4. Labor Force.
About 2200 men and boys and 1400 women and girls, the majority white persons, were employed. In addition, there were 260 male Negroes brought from the South for the season.

5. Transportation.
The majority of the non-migrant workers were transported in company or grower-owned and operated trucks to and from the plantation. T hey were picked up at central points in neighboring towns or cities between 5:45 and 6:30 a.m. and returned late in the afternoon. In most cases no segregation of the sexes were provided in transportation.

6. Working Conditions.
An improvement was observed in number and condition of privies; however, old failure to provide separate privies for men and women was present and many privies were found at too great a distance from sheds for convenient use. Two plantations had no privies, nine provided privies for women only and only 10 of the 27 plantations had a privy for each sex.
No improvement in drinking facilities was evident. On nine fields the common dipper was in use, subjecting the workers to danger of infection; seven fields supplied containers with faucets or unguarded inverted spigots but no drinking cups; and only six had containers with faucets and paper cups. First aid kits were found only on one-half of the plantations. A few of the others offered a dusty, loosely covered, tin box containing exposed cotton and an antiseptic.

7. Living Conditions.
Twelve company owned and operated boarding houses and three company owned private dwellings with boarders were visited by the investigators. It was reported that conditions differed little from those existing in 1938 when they were discovered to be generally poor. There was, however, a noticeable decline in the number of children housed in private dwellings "where in previous years the most shocking conditions were found".
Some boarding houses were for both male and female workers; others, separated the sexes; still others were for boys and/or girls; a few were for Negroes

only. In three boarding houses for white males the board ranged from $6.50 to $7.00 a week for three meals a day and a room usually shared with one or two others. Two houses which boarded both sexes, in one of which were found boys and girls and in the other, adults, charged $1.25 a week for bed and coffee served three times daily. Dry meals and canned foods, seldom a hot meal, were served the young workers. "The inability of these children to get fresh vegetables in the few small stores in the vicinity and to secure refrigeration for milk and meat is still a matter of the gravest concern", reported the investigators.

Six company boarding houses were for colored males. One a former CCC camp, by far the most adequate, charged $4.00 a week for bed and three meals a day. The other five were extremely poor, charged no rent for bed and the men pooled the weekly food costs which ranged from $2.50 to $3.50 per person. Buildings usually were found to be fire traps, crowded, lacking washing and bathing facilities, and containing foul smelling privies. In many cases the bedding provided was worn, dirty and inadequate.

Much could and should be done to construct improved and additional boarding houses, stated the investigators. To support their contention they pointed to the fact that "in 1938 one company built a large two story boarding house for white males which serves as an example of what can be done toward a better standard of living on our tobacco plantations. Each of the 38 single rooms contained a single bed, large dresser and alcove clothes closet. The bedding was clean and adequate. Off each of the two, large, confortably furnished living rooms was a screened porch of almost the same size. There were three exits by stairway and a fire extinguisher on each floor. In the basement were toilets, tiled wash sinks and showers, hot and cold water....."

The Department of Labor has concluded time and again that although the voluntary agreements have improved conditions, protective legislation was the most effective way of meeting the issue.

B. THE LABOR SUPPLY SITUATION

Findings of the Farm-Labor Survey of the Connecticut Sub-Committee on Farm Labor. 1/

In March of this year this group conducted a state-wide farm-labor survey on a sample basis for the purpose of canvassing the farm labor demand situation in the coming agricultural season in the light of the heightened industrial-defense production program. A questionnaire was used as an instrument to obtain the data. Three sets of answered questionnaire forms were returned: (a) 464 replies from non-tobacco farmers, including dairy, poultry, fruit and vegetable farmers: (b) 18 shade tobacco farms representing nine large corporative growers: and (c) 13 farmers whose major crop was sun-grown (or out-door grown) tobacco. 2/

The first group of farmers reported that of the 680 full-time regular farm workers whom they employed in 1940, 239, or slightly over one third, had left their jobs for work in factories or had been inducted into army training as a result of the Selective Service Act. 3/ These figures lose much of their value as the findings do not reveal the number of lost workers who were replaced. The percentage labor loss is probably somewhat less than one-third since 119 farmers, of the unknown number who had experienced such losses were successful in obtaining replacements, either in whole or in part. To counterbalance the salutary effect of these replacements, however, it was found that

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1/ Two agricultural groups in the state have currently concerned themselves with the farm-labor shortage problem: the committee on farm labor of the Connecticut Agricultural Defense Council and the sub-committee on farm labor of the State Agricultural Planning Committee. The personnel of the two committees are practically identical and to all intents and purposes can be considered as one.

2/ The method used to conduct the survey left much to be desired from a scientific point of view. No instructions accompanied the questionnaire, and the enumerators, where employed, were not trained. Some of the questionnaires were handled through the mail, while others were filled out by county agents or members of the local farm bureaus who interviewed the informants.
A substantial number of the returns were only partially complete, while others were neither uniform nor consistent. These deficiencies in the data somewhat reduced the value of the findings.

3/ Over 75 per cent of the losses found jobs in industry.

about 100 of these regular farm employees, or about 15 per cent of the total employed in 1940, were classified with the Selective Service as Class I registrants who are subject to army call as soon as their numbers are reached.

This group of farmers reported also that they were in need of about 250 regular men at the time of the survey (middle of March) and would use an additional 1,000 seasonal workers later in the season. The latter figure, it was noted, is about 300 seasonal part-time workers less than they employed in 1940. To what extent their reduction in labor requirements is a conscious adaptation to an alleged shrinkage in the available local supply of farm laborers and to what extent it may be explained by error in estimating 1941 needs is, of course, difficult to say without further information.

Tabulation of the statistical information received from 18 shade tobacco farms representing nine large corporative growers shows that in 1940 they employed on 3800 acres about 250 regular year-round workers and over 5,000 extra seasonal workers between July 15 and September 1. These growers reported that of the 250 regular workers employed that year, they had lost 113 to industry and 35 through the operations of the Selective Service Act, or about 60 per cent of this help. In this as in the former case, no information is available of how much of this loss was replaced. The large majority of the farm laborers employed on these farms, moreover, are seasonal hands, and the major concern of the shade tobacco growers is, therefore, with the present availability of this type of labor. But this is the question for which the survey provides no answer. The 18 farms, it should be noted, employed on an average about 300 extra seasonal workers per farm in 1940, and together hired from 60 to 70 per cent of the total labor employed by all shade tobacco growers in the Connecticut Valley of the state.

Records secured from 13 farmers whose major crop was sun-grown tobacco show that in 1940 they employed 41 regular farm hands and 115 extra seasonal workers, or, on the average, about three regular and nine seasonal laborers per farm. No information is available showing the seasonal labor losses, and indeed could not be ascertained before the commencement of the season; that with respect to regular workers indicated a loss of almost one-third.

While it can be agreed upon that the survey established no conclusive grounds for judging the issue of farm labor shortage, it does suggest the current existence of a moderate problem -- at least as far as the supply of regular farm workers is concerned. No relief to the problem is provided by the survey with regard to the forthcoming seasonal labor supply -- the major item of apprehension. It is reasonable to believe that the same forces affecting the regular

farm labor supply will make themselves felt on the seasonal variety of farm laborers. If this proves true, the labor shortage of these workers will be much larger and more acute. Absorption of rural workers into higher-paying and steadier "defense jobs", and the possible compulsion to use inexperienced workers, and hence larger numbers, are the major factors governing this conclusion.

As partial, but concrete evidence of a tightened farm labor market, the FSA County Supervisor in Hartford County revealed that applications for loans to be used for hiring labor this agricultural season show larger sums requested for this item than last year, largely because they are being estimated on a daily-wage basis of $3.50 as compared with $2.50 in 1940. According to the same source, FSA clients who in previous years hired out to other farms as activity became slack on their own are being drawn off by the local factories, plants, and mills, probably with defense orders. Public road construction in the county is also absorbing a number of workers who otherwise would seek farm employment. In addition, it has been observed that a number of farmers have lost their sons and regular farm hands either to defense industries or to the Army through the operation of the Selective Service Act.

Connecticut as a Defense Production Area

The argument advanced in connection with the farm labor supply problem in Connecticut is that the state has become an arsenal of the national defense program, and that expansion of its industries has, on the one hand, depleted the supply of local farm workers, and, on the other hand, increased the need for farm labor to meet the larger demands upon farmers for milk, eggs, fruits, vegetables, and other farm products for the swollen numbers of industrial workers now in the state. The heightened activity of industrial defense production and its effect on the social economy of the state is suggested in part by a few of the following indices.

Among the 146 localities designated by President Roosevelt as "defense areas" where homes may be financed under new liberalized Federal Housing Administration regulations are the following seven cities or regions in Connecticut: Bridgeport, Bristol, Hartford, Meriden, New Britain, New Haven-Ansonia, New London-Groton-Norwich and Waterbury. Defense orders placed in the State from June 13, 1940 to January 31, 1941, totaled over six hundred million dollars. Almost 40 per cent of these orders have been placed in Hartford County, the heart of the tobacco growing area, and other third in New London County, an important berry, fruit and vegetable region.

The industrial boom and influx of workers is so extensive as to have reduced housing vacancy in the City of Hartford virtually to zero, and rents are at their highest level. Employment in Hartford County as of April 1 was 164 per cent of the accepted normal as of January 1, 1929; man-hours of work were up 156 per cent of

normal, according to a survey of 82 plants by the Hartford County Manufacturers' Association. The general relief load in Hartford, a source of seasonal farm labor, was about 25 per cent less in March, 1941, than at the same time a year ago, stated the State Welfare Commissioner.

The Impact of the Farm Labor Shortage on Various Types of Farming

Farm labor shortages, as they may be reflected in absolute scarcity of workers or in the payment of higher wages, do not usually affect all types of farming enterprises with equal intensity. Their acuteness increases in proportion to the volume of workers required per farm unit. This is especially evident when farms employing large numbers of seasonal workers are concentrated in a comparatively small geographical area. The extraordinary heavy demand for short-time seasonal farm hands which such agricultural enterprises make on the local labor markets is frequently greater than they could meet.

This situation has been observed even in normal times when the national economy is operating usually below full capacity. The problem becomes aggravated manifold when the country's economic plant has cause to function, as it has today in a period of national defense, at levels approximating full production and employment. In the present period of great industrial activity, shortages of farm workers for seasonal employment are more keenly felt because of the absorption of part-time, casual, and unemployed workers, many with rural background and farm experience, into industry which offers higher wages, longer tenure of employment and generally better working conditions than does agriculture.

In Connecticut, the case under review, the weight of the farm labor shortage can be expected to fall most heavily and in the first instance upon the shade tobacco growers. As a group, they are the employers of the largest number of seasonal harvest labor, both on a total and per farm-unit scale. Numerically, their plantations are concentrated in a comparatively small geographic area of the state. At the same time, it must be emphasized, these agricultural interests are in a more favorable position to absorb the impact of the farm labor shortage than are those engaged in other types of farming. The shade tobacco and the large out-door tobacco growers have, for example, much better access to non-local labor markets than other farmers. A number of these tobacco growers, in fact, have been importing annually since 1916 Negro labor (mostly preparatory school and college students) from the South, and indeed have already made similar preparations for the coming season. Moreover, they are financially competent to out-bid other farmers for the available local labor. Not only are they able to pay higher wages, if necessary, but they can offer greater employment attraction in terms

of longer and steadier work and hence higher seasonal earnings. The non-tobacco farmers, however, particularly dairymen and fruit and vegetable farmers, less able to absorb the impact of the farm labor shortage, may be expected to be more keenly disadvantaged in this respect.

Appraisal of the Farm Labor Supply Situation

No conclusive evidence has been marshaled, so far at least as this observer has been able to gather, to demonstrate beyond a doubt that local and non-local laborers who in past years had been available for regular and seasonal work on farms in the state as a whole and in the Connecticut River Valley of the state in particular will not be available in sufficient numbers adequate to meet the labor requirements of farm operators for the coming 1941 cropping season. To draw from this observation, however, the conclusion that such an eventuality is unlikely or remote is to place an unwarranted confidence in the ability to predict or measure with any degree of accuracy what the labor supply situation will be in the agricultural season which lies ahead. Lack of complete factual information at this time, and the absence of fine techniques to measure labor shortages before they occur preclude the possibilities of assembling conclusive evidence as a basis for such prediction.

It is to be noted, however, that the farm labor survey conducted by the Connecticut sub-committee on farm labor did not reveal, as alleged, "That there will be a shortage of at least 2000 farm workers (in the shade-tobacco harvest) this coming summer" in Hartford County. This estimate is completely divorced from the findings of the survey, having no basis in established fact. It is purely a rough figure based on an arbitrary assumption that one-third of the seasonal farm workers employed in the shade tobacco harvest in 1940 will probably be unavailable in 1941. With no pretense at scientific accuracy, it has been similarly estimated that out-door tobacco growers in the state will be short about 1500 harvest laborers, fruit growers, about 1000 workers, vegetable farmers, about 2000 workers, and dairy farmers, about 4000 workers -- or a total of about 10,000 seasonal workers. No criticism of these estimates is intended, but it should be understood that the basis of these predictions is extremely tenuous.

It may be stated categorically that difficulties of securing seasonal farm laborers in sufficient numbers and of required experience and skill in the various agricultural regions of Connecticut are already being felt and may be expected to grow in June, July, and August, at the peak of hiring. This is not equivalent to a prediction of an acute labor shortage on the farms and tobacco plantations of Connecticut. A more realistic and objective interpretation of the term "difficulty" as it applies to the growers' efforts to obtain farm labor is that which describes the condition of the farm labor market in relation to the customary facility exper-

ienced by labor-employing farmers in tapping this market in former years. In the past, the supply of farm labor was so abundant that workers came up to the farms seeking jobs. As a result, farmers themselves exerted little or no effort to obtain their farm hands and seasonal harvest workers. The local State employment offices, moreover, had no reason to concern themselves with the farm labor market, seldom being patronized either by farmers or farm laborers. Today these conditions no longer prevail. The surplus of farm labor is not as large and labor-employing farmers are compelled to go to labor rather than the reverse.

Action Taken to Offset Local Labor Shortages

The State Agricultural Defense Council and its sub-committee on farm labor has been operating on two broad fronts in their efforts to tap sources of farm labor for the coming cropping season: the local-state and the out-of-state labor markets.

At the request of the sub-committee, the State Department of Education over the Commissioner's signature has mailed letters to principals of high and vocational schools, to headmasters of preparatory schools, and to presidents of a number of colleges in Connecticut, requesting them to canvass their student bodies with regard to the question of willingness to work on farms during the coming season. Estimates indicate there are about 40,000 to 50,000 high school boys over 14 years of age and about 8,000 college boys in the state. Following this preliminary canvass, the State Employment Service is expected to follow up with a registration effort by providing cards to be filled out by students willing and able to accept such employment. These registration cards are to be collected by the State local employment offices, and a farm-labor registry established. This job was planned to be completed by the end of April.

The sub-committee is counting more heavily on this potential source of seasonal labor than on any other. Most of the non-tobacco farmers have indicated their willingness to hire youth-labor where adult-labor is not available. To tobacco growers, particularly the "shade-men", the employment of youth-labor is not a novelty. They have had long experience with it, and in fact prefer it because it lends itself far better to harvesting operations (picking tobacco leaves under large "tents") than adult-labor. An investigation conducted in 1917 by the National Child Labor Committee in the shade tobacco fields of the Connecticut River Valley revealed that two-thirds of the children employed were between 8 and 13 years of age. 1/ This proportion has declined materially in the years following. If a serious labor shortage materializes, this season, however, an increase in the employment of children under 14 years of age may be expected.

1/ R. Fuller and M.Strong, Child Labor in Massachusetts.

In addition, the State Employment Service has agreed to expand generally their farm placement activities in the state, particularly in such major potential labor reservoirs as Hartford, New Haven, New Britain, and Bristol. It is planned also to examine the potential farm labor supply among those enrolled in NYA, WPA, and rural and non-rural defense training centers for out-of-school youth. The Out-door Aid Division of the Department of Public Welfare of Hartford also has been canvassed, and has already submitted to tobacco growers a list of 150 of its inmates at Camp Nehantic, Oakdale, Connecticut, for possible employment in the harvest. The old-age composition of this group, however, reduces the value of this labor source.

In connection with recruiting out-of-state labor, the Agricultural Defense Council, through its sub-committee, has submitted to the Connecticut State Employment Service a list of 37 Negro educational institutions to be forwarded to State Employment Services in several of the southern states for the purpose of canvassing the labor supply available among the students of these institutions. Young men between the ages of 17 and 25 will be preferred. It is reported that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has endorsed this project.

The Housing Question in Relation to the Labor Shortage

Among other proposals, the State sub-committee on farm labor has recommended that abandoned or otherwise unoccupied CCC camps in Connecticut be obtained for the purpose of housing non-local workers employed on farms. This proposal, of course, has a direct bearing on the general problem of labor shortages. Particularly, however, it is advanced as a formula for the alleviation of the anticipated labor shortage of those farmers who are least able to absorb its impact. It is precisely the realization of the potential employment-attraction strength of the shade and the large outdoor tobacco farmers that is the governing factor behind the CCC camp proposal, at least in the Connecticut River Valley. To the extent, it is reasoned, that the seasonal labor demand of these agricultural tobacco interests could be diverted from the strictly local or even non-local intra-state labor markets, the greater the opportunities of other types of farmers to successfully tap the local labor reservoirs the coming season. But a successful and substantial diversion of the seasonal labor demand of the tobacco growers from local to remote labor sources can be achieved only by overcoming the major obstacle standing in the way -- namely, the absence of sufficient housing. Housing facilities which tobacco growers at present can offer to out-of-state or other non-local farm laborers are extremely limited, and, it can be conceded, without additional accomodations the influx of such labor would be materially curtailed. The use of an unoccupied CCC camp in the Connecticut Valley is advanced, in the last analysis, as a lever capable of alleviating the farm-labor shortage condition affecting non-tobacco farmers by enabling the

tobacco farmers to increase their ability to import or to employ imported out-of-state or other non-local labor.

The Problem of Housing Non-Local Workers

If the employment of non-local or migratory seasonal farm workers on a larger scale than heretofore becomes necessary this coming season in Connecticut agriculture, as it seems it would, the largest employers of such labor will undoubtedly be the shade tobacco growers and the large outdoor tobacco farmers. There is ample evidence, both current and historical, to support this prediction. If this is done, and assuming no expansion of housing facilities, their labor shortages will be overcome only at the expense of the housing, health, and living conditions of such workers. Thus, conditions similar to those which developed in the last World War will be repeated. At that time the importation of about 2000 laborers (practically all Negroes) from New York, Boston, and from the South, created housing and health problems which bordered on a public scandal. Workers were housed in every conceivable shelter, ranging from cellars to tobacco barns.

Today, as in 1916, there are comparatively few tobacco growers who have sufficient and adequate facilities to house any substantial numbers of non-local laborers. This deficiency will be aggravated, of course, if greater numbers of non-local workers are employed this year than in the past. At present, perhaps a third to one-half of the tobacco growers have houses or shelters which fairly adequately accomodate comparatively small numbers of such workers. No more than 25 per cent of the total number of all seasonal workers are usually housed by tobacco growers in dwellings provided by them either directly or through arrangements with persons conducting boarding houses or taking in roomers. It is doubtful whether more than one out of 10 of these growers are in a position to provide adequate housing with the facilities at hand, if the total or per plantation ratio of non-local seasonal to local seasonal labor is increased materially over 25 per cent.

Only a handful of tobacco growers are now prepared to meet such an emergency. Indeed, one of them purchased a few years ago the facilities of an abandoned Civilian Conservation Corps Camp accomodating about 200 persons. Last year, this shade tobacco grower housed in this camp about 70 workers, mostly Negro students and single men from the South, using the rest of the facilities for storage and other purposes.

On the other hand, dairy farmers who as a group also employ large numbers of seasonal hands are usually able to house such workers in their own homes because individually they hire only one or two extras at the peak of operations. They could accomodate such workers, however, only if they are white and of a reasonably high

moral character. The other types of farming enterprises in the state have had no experience, for the most part, in housing seasonal agricultural workers, and indeed have had no occasion to do so in the past. It is extremely doubtful whether many of them are prepared today to provide housing for non-local seasonal labor.

The Farm Labor Supply Situation in Other Regions of Connecticut

1 - New Haven County

About 25 per cent of the state's acreage in truck crops is found in New Haven County. The 11,000 acres devoted to these crops are chiefly in string beans, sweet corn, potatoes and tomatoes, but the county produces many other varieties of vegetables. Orchard fruits and berries are also grown in this county, but in terms of acreage are less important than truck crops. In addition, this area ranks third in the state in the production of milk. In 1939, the county's 17,000 cows produced almost 106 million pounds of milk or about 15 per cent of the total malk output of the state. Local markets consume the largest bulk of the county's output of vegetables, fruits and milk.

The major crops requiring seasonal harvest labor in this county are vegetables, strawberries and orchard fruits. Dairy farms are also in need of extra labor for haying and silo filling. The seasonal labor peak on the county's dairy farms, however, is small in comparison to the seasonal harvest requirements of the above-mentioned crops. It has been estimated that at seasonal peaks there are about 900 extra jobs for varying periods of employment on the farms of the county. Fruit harvesting requires an estimate of 345 workers, vegetables, 235, strawberries, 230, and dairy farms, about 80. There is, however, a moderate degree of dovetailing of the seasons to enable farm workers to be employed on more than one job. Assuming reasonable labor mobility and more effective control of the seasonal labor market, it is possible for fewer than 900 workers to meet the seasonal peak labor requirements of all the farms in the county. The cropping seasons are as follows:

Strawberry picking -	June 1-21
Haying	June 15 - August 1
Potato harvesting	July 15-August 15 and Sept.15-Oct.15
Fruit picking	September 1 - October 15
Silo filling	September 15-October 15

In former years, the problem of securing sufficient numbers of workers to harvest the vegetables, fruits and berries and to cut the hay and fill the silos has not been acute. Farmers had experienced occasional difficulties from time to time, but no widespread labor shortage. This year, however, there is a strong feeling among farmers that such an eventuality is imminent in July, August and September, the height of the cropping season. The planting season

seems to have evinced no serious labor supply problem. Defense production in the New Haven area, it is alleged, is absorbing the labor which ordinarily is employed on farms. Analysis of the several factors governing the present situation points to two developments: (a) a moderate contraction in the seasonal labor market and (b) a more pronounced curtailment of the supply of regular or year-round help.

For many years harvest operations in this county have been performed by large numbers of women and young girls of high school age who together constituted as much as 50 per cent of the extra seasonal labor force. These workers, mostly Polish and Italian women and their native-born children from neighboring towns and cities are transported by the growers to and from the farms. This type of labor may not be forthcoming as readily as in former years in families where the chief breadwinner has been favored by more lucrative employment -- perhaps in a defense industry. It does not seem likely, however, that any appreciable number of families will find themselves in such favoring circumstances as to reject opportunities for additional earnings especially if they are sought after vigilantly and if wages are made more attractive than in the past. Moreover, with the present intensification of the efforts of local public employment services any losses in the ranks of adult farm labor will be replenished probably in large part by youth labor. The local employment office in the New Haven area, in fact, has anticipated this development and has built up an agricultural labor registry of almost 900 boys 14 years of age and over who expressed a willingness to work on farms. Defense industries are forbidden by State law to hire boys under 18 years of age, and although some of them will find non-factory jobs vacated by others, the majority of them will be available for some kind of summer work, including farm employment in many instances. Finally, there is no reason to believe that a substantial number of high school girls, who in former years represented about 25 per cent of the seasonal labor supply, will not be available this season. In short, as far as this region of Connecticut is concerned, a large part of the traditional seasonal farm labor supply probably will be available but only after an intelligent and vigorous effort is made to organize and rationalize the local labor market. This may entail, in this as in other commercial farming regions, the necessity of tapping an increasing number of young workers and the raising of wages to attract the adult farm labor.

The labor supply situation with respect to regular or year-round help, on the other hand, is less encouraging for the farm employers. Experienced farm workers are able to obtain jobs in factories today at much higher wages than those they have been receiving in agriculture. This type of agricultural worker, moreover, usually possesses some skill in handling tools and machinery, is accustomed to long hours at hard work and has acquired other attributes readily acceptable to industry. It is not difficult to understand that as

defense industries step up production and employment, more and more of these professional farm workers will leave the farms for the factories. This movement has already begun and is reflected in the rise of monthly wages by about $10. at various levels. Thus farm hands who only a short time ago were being paid $35, $40 and $45 per month with board and room, are now getting $45, $50 and $55. These wage increases may prove to be more effective as time goes on in stemming migration from the farms to factories especially if the cost of living in defense centers rises sharply.

To counteract the forces which are pulling labor off the farms, there is a renewed emphasis upon the use of machinery wherever possible. There is much evidence that dairy farmers who as a group employ considerable number of year-round labor and who particularly are being affected by these forces are resorting to labor-replacing machinery. Sales of milking machines, for example, are showing significant gains in commercial dairy farming regions. In addition, farm management specialists are urging more careful planning of farm work and recommending adjustments in the farm economy more consistent with the changing farm labor supply situation.

2. Litchfield County

Litchfield is the major dairy farming county in the State. In 1939 its 26,000 cows produced over 161 million pounds of milk or 22 per cent of the total output of the State. That year it also had about 2100 acres in a variety of vegetables, 70 per cent of which were in potatoes. The principal labor requirements, however, are on dairy farms, mostly of the year-round type. Seasonal short-time workers are also in demand for haying late in the spring and filling silos in the late summer. It was this category of labor more than the regular farm hands which aroused apprehension of shortages.

In an effort to determine the extent of these feared shortages and to ascertain prospective labor needs the county farm bureau labor committee conducted a survey among the labor-employing farmers of the county. Some 2500 questionnaires were mailed out, but unfortunately only about 165 were returned. The dairy farmers who answered the questionnaire, however, were large entrepreneurs who usually require the bulk of the farm labor in the county.

Of the total number of farmers who answered the question "do you need farm help", about 60 per cent replied in the affirmative. Further questioning revealed they were "in need" of approximately 340 workers at the time of the inquiry (early in April), and of this number, they indicated, about 70 per cent were needed for part-time seasonal work. The county farm bureau labor committee interpreted this data as revealing a labor shortage. A closer examination of the results, however, arouses considerable doubt as to the validity of this conclusion.

The phrasing of the question, "do you need farm help", for example, does not reveal the total effective demand for labor but, in many cases, may be taken to mean labor that the informant could use but, for some reason or other, is not able to hire. Moreover, assuming that expression of "need" was equivalent to ability to hire, the total demand did not apply to the actual time of the inquiry. In fact, those that answered the question "would you hire help now if you could get it", reported a demand for only 81 workers, or less than 25 per cent of the number they stated were "needed". The large majority of the workers in demand were of the seasonal type. There is also, of course, the other side of the equation -- the supply factor. There was nothing on the schedule to indicate that the informant had made any effort to recruit labor or what channels he had employed to obtain needed labor. Without this information there is no basis for appraising, even indirectly, the condition of the available supply of farm labor in the county.

About 90 farmers, or slightly more than half of the number who returned the questionnaire, stated that they had lost help to industry and to the "draft". Almost three-fifths of them, however, reported they had replaced the help thus lost. The number of workers lost and replaced were not specified and this omission prevents a quantitative appraisal of the net loss.

A more recent canvass of the labor supply and demand situation in this county indicates that no serious farm labor shortage may be expected in 1941. The State local employment office has contacted a number of the farmers who in the questionnaire stated they needed labor but found no unusual demand. Many of the farmers had either replaced the labor which they had lost or had been successful in retaining their present help by raising wages. It is significant that in a number of instances farm operators themselves were found to have left their farms for jobs in defense industries and were in the market for labor to take their place. It was reported that such jobs were difficult to fill because of the low wages offered. One county official summed up the situation as follows: "Some of these fellows are going to do their own work now, some are going to improve housing conditions for their regular help with a little raise to boot."

To meet any future labor emergency in this county, several courses have been or plan to be followed. Schools have been canvassed for possible summer help, and in case of shortages of adult labor youth workers will probably be hired in larger numbers than heretofore. There is also a vigorous movement on the part of dairy farmers to substitute milking and haying machines for hand labor. Farm management specialists are also urging farmers to adjust their farm economy with the object of minimizing labor needs. Typical of such advice appeared in one of the local farm newspapers:

"With farm labor scarce and wages increasing, it is good business this year to reduce labor requirements on farm in every possible way, says P. L. Putnam, farm management specialist at the University of Connecticut.

"It is more important than ever, he believes, for farmers to provide six months of good pasture for dairy animals. 'Let the cows do the work of providing roughage for the summer months,' Mr. Putnam says. 'You don't have to pay them wages.'" 1/

1/ Litchfield County Farm Bureau News, April 1941.